

7 March 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT : Comments on PNIOs

1. For whatever value they may have, I pass on to you the following thoughts concerning the PNIO problem.

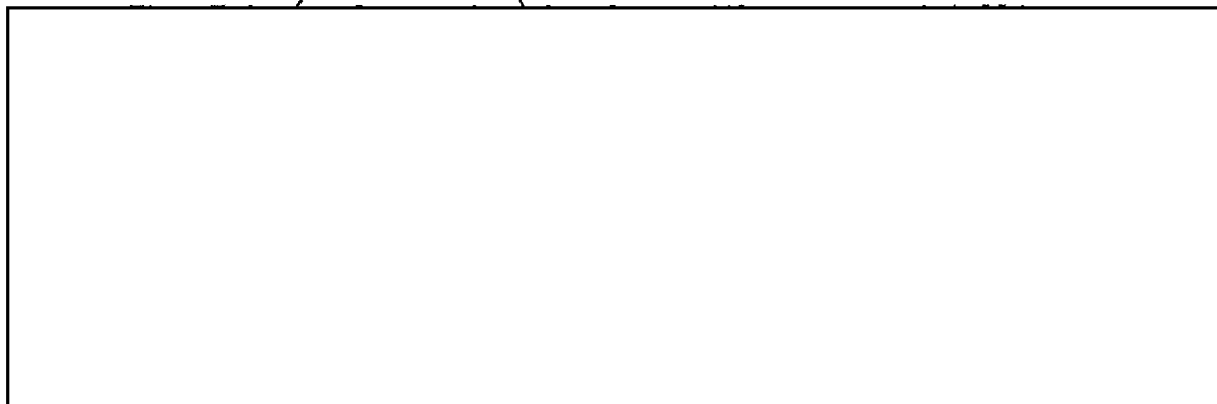
Purpose of PNIOs

The current version of DCID No. 1/3 (PNIO) gives the following as the purpose of the PNIO lists:

- a. A guide for the coordination of intelligence collection and production (para. 1).
- b. A stable basis for intelligence planning (para. 4).
- c. A basis for determining appropriate research and collection requirements (Annex, para. 1).
- d. The critical factors which require special attention and effort (Annex, para. 2).
- e. Guidance for planning the allocation of collection and research resources...but not constitute in themselves research and collection requirements (Annex, para. 4).

It is clear upon inspection that these stated purposes are inconsistent and in part contradictory. Similar inconsistency and contradiction is found in the list itself. To mention only a few examples:

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2. It has been alleged that, despite their deficiencies, statements of PNIOs serve a useful purpose in providing direction and guidance to research and collection activities, and ensure that "national" intelligence objectives are not lost sight of in pursuit of "departmental" objectives. With respect to guidance to research and collection, it is noted that, based upon recollection and cursory check of agency contributions, there is no indication that any agency took seriously into account the PNIOs in developing its plans and programs for FY 1964. In particular, DD/P, which indicated certain changes in its program, did not refer to the PNIOs as a basis therefore. ORR's program statement is interesting in this regard.

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3. In sum, I think the evidence is quite convincing that the PNIOs are not used to any significant degree as guidance in making decisions with respect to planning or allocating collection and research effort. They are used frequently to justify, post factum, decisions and plans which have been reached on quite other grounds. With respect to "national" vs. "departmental" objectives, it appears that, in many cases, the PNIOs have been deliberately used as a vehicle for obtaining recognition -- after a fashion -- for "departmental" objectives. In any case, there is no item in the present PNIO list which is not, in fact, also a departmental objective. And it is questionable whether there are any significant departmental objectives which are not included in the PNIO list.

4. It has sometimes been maintained that PNIOs can, or ought to, be used as the immediate source of requirements for collection. Insofar as requirements to be levied on existing collection facilities and assets are concerned, realistic requirements can only be arrived at after each specific problem has been examined and studied by the substantive experts, and after they have determined what information, not presently available, is essential to arriving at an intelligence solution or estimate. The point to be noted here is that the PNIO cannot be used as a basis for requirements until and unless a research component undertakes to do substantive work on the problem.

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A further point to be noted is that collection components have available to them other forms of guidance than requirements stemming indirectly from, and thus related to, PNIOs. The question of how a collection component uses its resources is, in the final analysis, a matter for the chief of the component to decide; in terms of the direction he receives from and his responsibilities to his superior. Neither the PNIOs nor the requirements related to them are substitutes for this command responsibility. I believe [] makes a similar point in the second paragraph of his memorandum of 25 February 1963. "Each member must determine the appropriate effort required by his Department or Agency in the light of its resources and capabilities as related to the intelligence deficiencies or gaps noted."

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5. The conclusion seems unavoidable that the PNIOs, in their present form, serve no useful purpose and should be discarded.

6. The question remains as to whether the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) should not provide some kind of guidance to the agencies in order to assist them in planning their activities and allocating their resources. In considering this question we must distinguish, I believe, two levels or types of planning which can be undertaken by an intelligence organization.

a. The first type is essentially short-range and consists in the determination as to how existing resources, with their existing capabilities and limitations, should be employed. For example, an intelligence research element can utilize its personnel to work on one or another of several areas of the world. This flexibility, however, is subject to severe limitations. Analysts competent in political science cannot profitably be redirected to produce intelligence on missiles or atomic energy. Similarly limited flexibility is to be found in collection components. These components can redirect

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here and now. For this type of planning, the semi-annual program of National Intelligence Estimates (prepared by the Board of National Estimates) may well provide the basis for useful guidance. This program does show the subjects and areas to which some collection and research resources must be devoted during the coming half year. There is, I believe, little doubt that this program does have an affect upon the use made of these assets. This type of guidance corresponds, to some extent, to [] I.a. "to serve directly

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as a program guide for particular intelligence services and activities." To be useful for this type of guidance, the present ONE Program statement should perhaps be expanded to give some indication, for each estimate, of its scope and particular thrust or point of emphasis. This additional statement, of course, would not be "terms of reference" as currently understood.

b. The second type or level of planning relates to the making of basic changes in the size or capabilities of collection and research resources. For example, if it is determined that a significantly greater research effort must be devoted to Africa, it will be necessary to staff the research component concerned with analysts who are competent and knowledgeable of African matters. This cannot be done overnight and requires the time-consuming effort of recruitment, training, and reassignment of personnel. Similarly,

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out, such a listing would not by itself serve as direct guidance for programming collection or production, and further steps would be needed to translate broad topics into specific action proposals. These further steps must necessarily be taken by the Departments and Agencies which control research and collection facilities. The advice and coordinating facilities of various USIB committees could well be used in certain instances. The final results would emerge as changes in the programs of the agencies. The Coordination Staff, in connection with its review of plans and programs, is responsible for reviewing the plans of the agencies "for consistency and proper allocation of effort." The phrase "proper allocation of effort" can be construed as referring either to allocation in accordance with NSCIDs and DCIDs or to proper allocation in terms of actual intelligence needs as they are expected to exist during the fiscal year under consideration. In the reviews of plans and programs which it has undertaken, the Coordination Staff has actually used both these criteria. For example, in the review of fiscal year 1964 plans, the Staff recommendations were mainly concerned with proper allocation in accordance with existing directives. However, its

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activities was based upon a presumed substantive intelligence need. The review of 1964 plans and programs undertaken by the Coordination Staff has been criticized, among other reasons, for the vague and

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imprecise nature of its recommendations. In the absence of any other concrete basis (except NSCIDs and DCIDs) to judge "proper allocation of effort" it is understandable that the review reached only limited and generalized conclusions. However, a long-range planning statement approved by USIB along the lines indicated above would provide a valuable guide to the Coordination Staff, enable it to review plans and programs against an agreed criterion, and to arrive at concrete conclusions and recommendations. These conclusions and recommendations would constitute a USIB "check up" on community action to attain agreed upon goals.

7. There may be another type of intelligence guidance which falls between the short-range and the long-range planning. This kind of guidance should relate to continuing intelligence problems for which no solution or resolution can be anticipated at any time in the future. Perhaps the word "planning" is a misnomer in this context. Rather, it is a question of USIB reminding the intelligence community that in both short-range and long-range planning it must keep in mind, and continue to make adequate provision for, these continuing problems; such as early warning, Sino-Soviet Bloc, capabilities for attack and defense, the capabilities of communist parties throughout the world, and so forth.

8. It is suggested, therefore, that the PNIOs in their present form be eliminated. In place thereof, three separate but related types of guidance would be provided by the USIB.

a. Short-range guidance, based upon an expansion of the present schedule for National Estimates.

b. Long-range guidance, specifying anticipated major national intelligence goals requiring broad changes in the orientation or allocation of intelligence effort. These major goals should be anticipatory and forward looking, or, as [] may mean in his memorandum, "candidates for disaster." This guidance, while subject to annual review, would probably not change greatly from year to year.

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c. Guidance as to continuing intelligence problems. This guidance also would tend to change very slowly, since it is a reminder list and would encompass many of the relatively permanent items in the category I. of the present PNIOs.

9. In further development of these suggestions, it may be feasible for certain USIB committees, or ad hoc groups called together for the purpose, to develop further guidance statements on an area basis, derived in the main from a. and b. above, but including other area problems of outstanding importance. Such supplementary guidance would attempt also to identify within each stated problem those specific elements that should be further examined for particular collection effort.

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10. It should be emphasized that no revamping of the PNIOs, or the adoption of the suggestions outlined above, will eliminate the necessity for the following two principles:

a. Continuing responsibility on the part of chiefs of collection and research components for decisions as to the nature and direction of their activities.

b. The continuous development of specific requirements by research elements as an integral part of the process of intelligence analysis. There can be no substitution or short-cut for these two principles.



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